(a) the period for which such contracts are usually given;

(b) the procedure for renewal of such licences;

(c) whether it is a fact that the same contractors managed to renew the licences and are running their business for decades together; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government to break their monopoly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) As per extant policy, all new bookstall contracts are awarded to unemployed graduates, their cooperatives, partnerships, associations and co-operative societies of actual workers and vendors by inviting applications through Press Notifications after following prescribed procedure.

(b) Five years.

(b) to (e) The renewal is done after reviewing ttie performance of the bookstall licencee. Some of the licences are working for the last many years in view of their satisfactory performance and renewals in due course.

Period for booking railway reservation

3503. SHRI E. BALANANDAN: SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(c) whether Government are aware that the extended period for booking reservation in Railways from one month to two months before, has caused serious CTisis to get reservations in Railways as this has given enough scope for the touts and racketeers to block the tickets;

(d) whether it is rational to think that the people have to decide two months before their journey;

(c) if not, whether Government are considering to go back to earlier system of '10 days before' reservation in the age of computers;

(a) if so, when; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) No such complaints has been received.

(d) The major problem in getting reservation is during Summer Vacations, Puja Holidays, Winter Vacations etc. the days of which are known to passengers in advance and they can plan their journeys well in advance.

(e) There is no such proposal under consideration.

(f) Does not arise

(g) Any reduction in the period of advance booking will increase and not reduce touting activities.

Complaints from passengers of Rajdhani Express running between Patna and Delhi

3504. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to stater

(b) whether there have been complaints from passengers of Rajdhani trains as reported in 'Indian Express' dated 15th June, 1998 about Rajdhani train running between Patna and Delhi;

(c) if so, the number of such complaints received from passengers of various Rajdhani and Shatabdi trains during the last six months; and

(d) what action has been taken to ensure that passengers of these premier trains are provided all the facilities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(a) 230 complaints were recfcived from passengers of various Rajdhani/Shatabdi Express trains during the last six months.

(b) Catering services in these trains are being closely monitored and remedial action is taken. The Pantry car contract for New Delhi-Patna Rajdhani Express